

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A recording medium comprising:
 - a plurality of pieces of information stored hierarchically; and
 - various pieces of retrieval information so related to said plurality of pieces of information pieces of information as to be used for acquiring pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy.
2. The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said information is map information.
3. The recording medium according to claim 1, wherein said pieces of retrieval information correspond to various retrieval forms to be used to prompt a user to select the piece of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy by means of input operations and adapted to acquire any of the retrieval forms.
4. The recording medium according to claim 3, wherein said retrieval forms include a list form for displaying a list of pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy in order to prompt the user to select any of said pieces of information and an input plate form for prompting the user to input a specific piece of information included in said pieces of information in order to select a piece of information belonging to a lower layer of hierarchy.
5. The recording medium according to claim 4, wherein said information is map information; and said list form is designed to display a list of proper names of the areas contained in the map information.
6. The recording medium according to claim 4, wherein said information is map information; and said input plate form includes at least a letter template for specifying and inputting at least one of the Japanese alphabet letters or the English alphabet letters to be used to input information on the proper name of an area contained in the map information or a numeric keypad template for inputting proper numerical information relating to the house-number.

7. An information retrieving device comprising:

a reading section removably carrying a recording medium hierarchically storing pieces of information and adapted to read information recorded on the recording medium as defined in claim 1;

5 a retrieval information acquiring section for acquiring pieces of retrieval information stored on said recording medium as a result of reading operation of the reading section;

10 a retrieval form acquiring section for acquiring information on retrieval forms related to the acquired pieces of retrieval information and adapted to prompt a user to select pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy by means of input operations; and

15 an information selecting section adapted to recognize the pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy and selected as a result of the input operations using the retrieval forms contained in the acquired retrieval form information and acquire said pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy in response to the reading operation of said reading section.

8. The information retrieving device according to claim 7, further comprising:

a display device adapted to display various pieces of information; and

20 a display control section for causing said display device to display retrieval forms according to the information on retrieval forms acquired by said retrieval form acquiring section and adopted to prompt to the user to select said pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy by means of input operations.

9. An information retrieving device for retrieving and acquiring a plurality of pieces of information stored hierarchically in a memory section, comprising:

25 a retrieval information acquiring section for acquiring various pieces of retrieval information related to said pieces of information in order to acquire pieces of information stored in said memory section and belonging to lower layers of hierarchy;

a retrieval form acquiring section for acquiring information on retrieval forms related to the acquired pieces of retrieval information and adapted to prompt a user to

select pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy by means of input operations; and

an information selecting section adapted to recognize the pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy and selected as a result of the input operations using the retrieval forms contained in the acquired retrieval form information and acquire corresponding pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy.

- 5 10. The information retrieving device according to claim 9, wherein
said memory section stores retrieval information so as to be rewritable to other retrieval information on different retrieval forms.
- 10 11. The information retrieving device according to claim 9, wherein
said memory section stores pieces of information having a data structure in which the pieces of information are related to each other in such a way that a piece of information can be selected by using any of various retrieval forms.
- 15 12. The information retrieving device according to claim 9 wherein
said retrieval forms include a list form adapted to display a list of pieces of information belonging to a lower layer of hierarchy and prompt the user to select one of pieces and an input plate form adapted to prompt the user to input proper information of one of the pieces contained in said information in order to select the corresponding piece of information belonging to the lower layer of hierarchy.
- 20 13. The information retrieving device according to claim 9, wherein
said information is map information.
14. The information retrieving device according to claim 12, wherein
said information is map information; and
said list form displays a list of proper names of the areas contained in the map information.
- 25 15. The information retrieving device according to claim 12, wherein
said information is map information; and
said input plate form includes at least a letter template for specifying and inputting at least one of the Japanese alphabet letters or one of the English alphabet letters

to be used to input information on the proper name of an area contained in the map information or a numeric keypad template for inputting proper numerical information relating to the house-number.

16. The information retrieving device according to claim 9, further comprising:
5 a display device adapted to display various pieces of information; and
 a display control section for causing said display device to display retrieval forms according to the information on retrieval forms acquired by said retrieval form acquiring section and adopted to prompt to the user to select said pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy by means of input operations..
- 10 17. An information retrieving system comprising:
 a memory section hierarchically storing a plurality of pieces of information; and
 an information retrieving device defined in claim 9 and connected to the memory section by way of a network to retrieve and acquire information stored in said memory section.
- 15 18. An information retrieving system comprising:
 a memory section hierarchically storing a plurality of pieces of information;
 a terminal unit having an input section for specifying and inputting various pieces of information by input operations and a display device adapted to display various pieces of information; and
20 a server unit having a memory section connected to the terminal unit by way of a network so as to be able to transmit and receive various pieces of information and hierarchically storing a plurality of pieces of information, a retrieval information acquiring section for acquiring various pieces of retrieval information related to said pieces of information in order to acquire pieces of information stored in said memory section and
25 belonging to lower layers of hierarchy, a retrieval form acquiring section for acquiring information on retrieval forms related to the acquired pieces of retrieval information and adapted to prompt a user to select pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy by means of input operations, a display control section for causing the display device of the terminal unit to display the acquired retrieval form and an information

selecting section adapted to recognize the pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy and selected as a result of the input operations using the retrieval forms displayed on the display device and display corresponding pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy to the display device.

5 19. An information retrieving method comprising:

reading various pieces of retrieval information contained in the pieces of information stored hierarchically in a recording medium as defined in claim 1 and adapted to be used to acquire pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy;

10 acquiring various retrieval forms related to the read pieces of retrieval information so to be used to prompt a user to select pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy by means of input operations; and

15 recognizing the pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy and selected as a result of the input operations using the retrieval forms and acquiring corresponding pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy from said recording medium.

20. An information retrieving method for retrieving and acquiring a plurality of pieces of information hierarchically stored by an arithmetic section comprising:

acquiring various pieces of retrieval information related to said pieces of information so as to be used to acquire pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy;

acquiring retrieval form information on various retrieval forms related to the acquired pieces of retrieval information so to be used to prompt a user to select pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy by means of input operations; and

25 recognizing the pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy and selected as a result of the input operations using the retrieval forms of the acquired retrieval form information and acquiring corresponding pieces of information belonging to lower layers of hierarchy.

21. An information retrieving program for causing an arithmetic section to execute an information retrieving method as defined in claim 19.

22. An information retrieving program for causing an arithmetic section to execute an information retrieving method as defined in claim 20.

23. A recording medium readable storing an information retrieving program as
5 defined in claim 21 so as to be read by an arithmetic section.

24. A recording medium readable storing an information retrieving program as defined in claim 22 so as to be read by an arithmetic section.